Brexit – A Particular Perspective

by Friedrich Hansen

The recent surge in particular sentiments, anti-globailsm and authenticity politics betrays a longing for a politcal rapproachment between reality and representation or the way we think and the way we speak. More than anything this reflects the alienation of conservative minds from their leadership in the West. First because they gave up on the traditional family and second because identity politcis have almost eclipsed the yawning gap between rich and poor. We are talking about langauge and PC here too. For if Johann Georg Haman, the great antipode to Immanuel Kant, is right about language it is not its worldwide reach that matters most but its grasp of authentic expressions. Put differently it is about making language the medium again in which thinking becomes inseparable from speaking, a nexus first re-discovered by Lazar Gulkowitsch. It is something global images and TV can rarely communicate. Authentic speach used to be the blessing of human spiritual equality in traditional religious societies making them inimical to political correctness. In the 20th century Lazar Gulkowitsch would corroborate Haman's 18th century claims with a wealth of research along the lines of the Prague school of semantic linguistics as opposed to formally universalized Western linguistics of the Marxist Noam Chomsky. There can be little doubt that the concept of PC depends on this latter abstract and global notion of language, also known as Chomsky's "transformational-generative grammar". Invented at MIT in Cambridge, New England in the post-war period, it answered to the claims to power by Marxist internationalism. It conceptualized language within the framework of natural sciences and succeeded by levellling any particular cultures and national tongues or ethnicities. From there the liberal horizontal doctrine issued that all cultures are equal. The opposite route had been followed by Gulkowitsch's linguistics focused on phonology and semantics later developed further by his collegue Roman Jacobson.

It is not at all coincidental that the Slav branches of linguistics would focus on semantics and favored a diachronic approach to language as opposed to the Western ahistoric structuralist school. While the latter had the upperhand for too long under the tutelage of liberalism, all this seems ripe for change today under the promising auspices of anti-globalisation. Brexit and Trumpism are aligning the Anglosphere firmly on the side of forces aiming at throwing off the yoke of zero-sum thinking and intolerant doctrinal speech codes. It will help to rediscover the wealth of conservative open-mindedness which has its root in transcendental religion and is a superior source of spiritual freedom. It is set to end the tyranny of stereotypes and group think, which has stalled scientific creativity in the West and produced little more than gender metaphysics, clutter of the mind. The damage of stereotype to the human mind was first examined by Kierkegaard who thought that its

semantic networks would take away our moral compass subjecting it to other-directedness or heteronomy. As this is being produced by anti-religious secular society, it would inevitable resort to biology attempting to unify people under categories of race, later to be replaced by gender. Yet the mechanism of other-directed heteronomy remains exactly the same, except that racism is being replaced with sexism. This turned out to be a netwerk of prejudices and generalities forming a kind of conformist carapace that can blindfold the moral sensibilities and the voice of conscience. In this way Heidegger improved on Kierkegaard's example for heteronomy tied to the German generic "man" that human conscience had been degraded to conformism if not racial identity. This points back to Luther and the Reformation, i.e. his selling out on personal conscience to the state in the 16th century with his "cuius regio eius religio" - the inauguration of Protestant state conformism. A telling modern example has been provided in the movie "Il conformist" directed by Bertolucci in 1971: "A weak-willed Italian man becomes a fascist flunky who goes abroad to arrange the assassination of his old teacher, now a political dissident". The fascist conformist grew from Protestantism or to a much lesser degree from Catholic Austrofascism and Habsburgian Francofascism.

Protestant posturing was further developed by Kant, who based his argument for the autonomous individual and its capability of telling right from wrong, on the mere pretense of believing in God, the continuation of Lutheran posturing "as if". At the same time he dispensed of the moral inner self by disentangling human conscience from memory, transcendent reasoning and tradition. This of course refers to the proxy position of Christ and his triangulation between the two sexes, with Christ serving as organic proof of God's existence. After all if God sired a son he must exist. That's why Christians would never forgive the Jews for "killing the organic evidence" - the Messiah having arrived - for their successionist claims that Christianity made Judaism redundant. Well this absurd reasoning of Kant was only possible because of his antireligious bias which draw heavily on the Hellenist tradition of a split reality between surface and depth, appearance and essence, replicated in the split between Kant's "thing in itself" and the "thing as such". Cunningly Kant directed his assumption of God as arbiter of truth into the realm of "practical reason" as opposed to "pure reason" persevering on the Protestant anti-intellectual track. This represents just a further sentimental turn in the logic of incarnation of Jewish law with organic Christ. Kant only postulated a divine being "as if" suggesting it has been a human invention all along. Yet surely with this mental salto Kant confused transcendence with metaphysics in effect lowering the sublime "imitatio dei" into crude organic "mimesis" which is prone to violence as Rene Girard has demonstrated. This could be observed at the recent G20 summit in Hamburg where the Kantian "autonome" mob of Antifa & Co wrought havock worth forty million Euro. It brings to mind Kant's invention of the

autonomous individualism which coincided with the French Revolution, a political process whicha the time had been made pallatable for the German square by reducing it to an all-out robbery put on the stage as Friedrich Schiller's "Robbers". In England Edmund Burke would rise to the challenge with his authentic Catholic account, titled "Reflections on the Revolution in France". The status of Protestantism in Kants time had already been reduced to the impostor: Christ the old proxy takes on for Kant the profane role as triangulator of truth claims. For in authentic German fashion Kant values results higher than process or posturing higher than truthfullness, hence prevarication between theoretical and practical reason.

All this matters in terms of Gulkowitsch's inssitance that thinking, believing and talking are one united process turning our attention to wording as the key to history. Therefore the strangulation of language through speech codes such as political correctness is not a trivial issue and a linguistic-semantic examination might be worthwhile. It might help to uncover sensibilities of the English people which triggered Brexit, sensiblities toward their language, custom, particularist constitutionalism and casuistic law based on precendent. To be sure the "Writing on the Wall" of Europe's demise was first noticed by a member of the European parliament, Nigel Farrage of UKIP, who continues to inspire anti-globalist sentiments worldwide. For instance his rhetoric helped Roy Moore in the Alabama contest win a seat in the US senate. This rhetoric is nailing down precisely the difference between the way elites talk as opposed to the way they think and act, i.e. issues of authentic being. Put differently this is about reclaiming political particularism, everyone's "love of the little platoon, we belong to in society", of which Edmund Burke spoke (Paras 75-99, Reflections in the French Revolution, 1790), this "first principle of public affection" which the global elites keep mocking as populism, combining traditional values like family, nation and transcendent values.

The liberal elite is infatuated with the fictional world of pop (the primacy of possibilities) based on fantasy which is thriving on the Web, mainstream media and the music-, film- and gender industries. As a result all of us are consuming far more images these days than words and ideas. And yet images are static, highly stereotyped, perfectionistic and also the default medium of emotion while words are dynamic, divers, hierarchic and also the medium of intellect. This alone explains the drying up of meaningfull works in the arts and sciences in the West. For images by themselves pander to pride, facile status, complacency, or to envy, sameness and mirror thinking, whereas words alone are capable to reach into transcendence and can elicit change. From there we can understand why more traditional British sensibilities came to the fore from under the neutralized high gloss finish of elite talk emanating from Europe's smug chattering classes.

The voice of the middle class and more specifically of the country side reflecting authentic English pragmatic thinking has almost vanished. And yet the British seem to be far less ideological and irrational about climate change than the post-Nazi Germans as is suggested by their different attitude toward nuclear energy. On a number of issues the clash of cultures stirred up by Brexit is reflecting the pragmatic choice of “process” over Angst-driven “fait accomply”, or British fondness of debate against German quietism and conformism. An abyss of cultural diversity has opened up recently with many people harking back to Victorian values, if not to the days of 17th century civil war. That vibrant period saw the rise of British Israelism, epitomized by the New Jerusalem celebrated by Hubert Parry, William Blake and Edward Elgar. It began in Amsterdam with Menasse ben Israel, who had married Rahel Abrabanel, a scion of one of the oldest and most distinguished Jewish-Iberian families. Menasse’s book “Hope of Israel” of 1650 argued for the readmission of the Jews to England as a way of hastening the coming of the Messiah - a response to Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell forsaw the important role of Jewish “merchant princes” for English commerce and pleaded for a Jewish return. Menasse founded the largest Hebrew printing press in Europe in Amsterdam, was the teacher of Baruch de Spinoza and close friend of Rembrandt van Rijn.

Farrage & EU: The Writing on the Wall, Rembrandt Belshazzar’s Feast 1636

Yet it is the development of the tradition of English common law that more than anything embodies British identity - just as several curious London “Inns” of very oldfashioned lawyer associations. This explains why among the urban elites of the UK today only the lawyers stand out by siding with Brexit. Now the man who brought this about was the 17th century constitutional jurist John Seldon, son of a farmer and the most accomplished Hebraist of his time; “Selden deployed his immense scholarship to rebuff universalistic theories by turning their usual argument on its head — he argued that rational and abstract laws are utterly useless at compelling and ruling actual peoples, who have particular propensities and qualities,” says Ofir Haivri from the Herzl-Institut in Jerusalem, who just published a new Brexit-related book titled “John Seldon and the Western political Tradition” (2017, http://www.standpointmag.co.uk/counterpoints-july-august-2016-ofir-haivry-john-selden-english-jewish-law). Several generations of English philosemites, fluent in Hebrew, would ensure that an equally rebellious and erudite Judaism would make inroads into classic English liberalism and constitutional law. British Israelites were a tribe strongly associated with George Elliot through her novel Daniel Deronda, the stories of Prime Minister Benjamin Israeli and also with the famous Balfour Declaration of 1917 that cleared the way for Zionism.

Mentor of unique English Common Law, John Seldon 1584-1654

All this would have been unthinkable in Germany (Gertrud Himmelfarb: “Philosemitism in England” 2011). It is for all these reasons that valuable clues are to be gained form affinities in the Hebrew and English languages, both of which share a preference of dynamic verbs over static nouns. It seems almost that the indogermanic roots of the Anglosaxon tongue have to some degree been glossed over by the Semitic charisma, if the wealth of circumstancial “phrasal verbs” in English is any guide. No doubt, the variety and sheer number of English verbs stands out among all the major languages. This suggests England is much closer to dynamic Jerusalem than to static Athens. This can not least be gathered from the magisterial role of verbal expressions in Hebrew. No doubt, verbs are the backbone of both languages in the sense of settling both with a practical and realistic hue. Since verbal expressions lend support to the practical trajectory of thought they afforded Judaism the muliple talents emerging from Alexandria in antiquity and during the Arabic Enlightenment from Cordoba - long before Renaissance man made his apperance.

We might equally blame the wealth of verbal expressions for the sure-footed brand of English empiricism and pragmatism. The contrast to German idealism and scientific monism could not be greater, manifesting itself in a language enthralled by static nouns like virtual castles of hot air. This points back to the persisting influence of Greek metaphysics in Germany which is also behind a specific brand of German speculative philosophy. No country seems to have delved itself so deep into Hellenism as Germany, perhaps corroborated by the correspondence between the stretch of horizontal German provinces and the equally flat, chaotic multitude of the Greek polis. Greek-metaphysical trains of thought reaveal themselves through narcissist "mirror thinking" which is believed to have dominated the Occident until the romantic era - yet more so on the Continent than on the British Isles (M.H. Abrams “The Mirror and the Lamp”, 1953). German epistomology came under the spell of a sharp metaphysical split between idealism and materialism in the 19th century. It would eventually turn into a nemesis of sorts, seriously disturbing the mind of many a German artist or thinker: Hölderlin, Kleist, Winkelmann, Nietzsche and Otto Weininger among others (Eliza Marion Butler: „The Tyranny of Greece over Germany“, London: 1935/2012). Butler‘s brillaint study, fortunately just recently republished, was controversial in Britain and banned in Germany during the Nazi-Reich. She argued straightforwardly that Germany „has had too much exposure to Ancient Greek literature and art. The result was that the German mind had succumbed to 'the tyranny of an ideal'. The German worship of Ancient Greece had emboldened the Nazis to remake Europe in their image." To my knowledge this kind of Hellenistic derangement had no parallel in Britain - a country luckily more exposed to Judaism which as we have seen was to strengthen the English mind rather then weaken it.

Conversely the thinkers of the Protestant Continent, namely Leibniz and Spinoza, would set animated and non-animated beings on a level playing field, by that enabling the transition form Catholic subjective value theory to Protestant objective value of Adam Smith. A transcendental bent in the English mind would still survive in this period as with Smith‘s first book on the moral sentiments. English pragmatism left enough room and flexibility for rational and irrational trains of throught to coexist, allowing dynamic features of the soul to florish rather than static ones. This faculty rendered English much less amenable to the Greek and subsequently German metaphysical bent manifesting itself in proliferating abstractions and technical jargon. In the British isles any kind of -ism remained a hard sell while empirical, utilitarian and pragmatic concepts remainded deeply inrained in English epistemology.

At the same time idealist-materialist dualism and abstract-mechanistic concepts were common in Germany. The organic and mechanistic bent in Germany was a desiderate of medieval craftmanship. Because of the late German nation state the guild features persisted well into the 19th century and the romantics were still enthralled by them.

Eliza Marian Butler, 1885-1959 Cambridge University

While the artisan or craftsman is akin to pre-socratic and rather static Parmenides with his notion of split reality (appearance vs essence), the merchant is closer to the dynamics of Heraklitus' "Panta rhei". Characteristically the German language is heavy with rules for grammar reminiscent of medieval guilds with their habit of regulating anything. The regulatory and corporatist mentality sets Germany apart from free market temperament still prevalent in Britain. Thus German verbs are much more likely to be transformed into awkward nouns than the other way round. In addition even with verbs in German the intransitive or passive forms abound while in English the active or transitive verbs are more in use. Even more dramatically, however, during the Weimar period barely digested cultural tensions manifested themselves in grave linguistic deformations, compound nouns, elicited by shock-frozen images turned into clunky metaphors. These sprung from the instrumentalist thinking of the romantic soul, also drawing inspiration from the mechanistic-medieval linguistics. The result were unwealdy compounds that remain a permanent stain and nuisance of the German tongue, depriving it of any elegance – such as "Reichssicherheitshauptamt", "Reichsvollkornbrotausschuss" and hundreds more, which I am afraid cannot be translated.

The contrast to the soft and fluid English tongue could not be greater. Catching the movement, the flexible jargon of commerce served the English merchant class well. Even an accomplished German novelist such as Thomas Mann struggled with the mechanical medieval remnants. His awkward and often laborious sentences call to mind the wood cutter giving us few brilliant insights but more often clumsy forms and tiresome expressions in long sentences. His short stories though such as "Death in Venice" are a much better read. Mann is certainly the genius to enlighten us on the specifics of the Germanic soul by exposing the notoriously anxious German "Michel", the petit bourgeois. Being a proper idealist means, he needs to hold on to some solid compounds. Those nouns are needed to offer a structure meant to stabilize the feeble mind of the speaker in the act of speaking - a balancing tentative act to be sure. A speaker precarious in himself might hope to get some measure of certainty through rigid intellectual performances eager to claw sparks of truth from tangibles. The contrast to the freewheeeling yet still elegant swing of the English tongue with its distinct but loose grammar and relaxed semiotics is remarkable. Relaxed is perhaps an understatement for the mindboggling, playfull volatility of English synonyms.

Again this contrasts greately with the German inborn longing for recognition, more often than not nudging them towards pride and pomp, copied from the like-minded and irritable Greeks - whereas Englishmen are famous for their understatement, casual tone and flexible, non-assertive expressions. This might be among the reasons for denying the Germans in the run up of WW I the

role of a colonial power. The international community had convinced itself that Germany was incapable of looking after colonies abroad. Today this might be the course of some *deja vu* regarding German leadership in Europe with Chancellor Angela Merkel, famous for “sitting out” any conflict, improvising ad hoc before resorting to behind-the-scene dealings. Not for nothing have “idling” hands become her iconic torpe, just as it was with her mentor Kohl - both again reminiscent of the medieval craftsman who upon idling would rarely find a place to put his hands.

Germans are characteristically pusilannimous and absorbed with details lacking the grand picture. This is beign corroborated by the popularity of Spinoza’s pantheism which peaked in Germany during the enlightenment like nowhere else. The German fondness of reification and compounds are like “ready mades” - Dada was a genuine German creation - with little demands on patience. Looked at more closely, compound nouns suggest perfection, order and finitude while English phrasal verbs are sustaining open end, process and inclings of infinitude. Thus a conservative language like English is prone to expressions of the brisk swing between the subjective and objective aspect of an issue reflecting its transcendent bent. More metaphysically inclined German does lack this flexibility, cherishes „facts and results“ or the *fait accompli*. This ontological gap is among the secrets that seem to be driving the daring and jolly English temperament which again contrasts with German gloom and seriousness, needed to gloss over always lurking anxieties. On principal grounds brilliantly explicated by Kierkegaard, surging anxieties were the product of reckless secularization in the 19th century, yet not so much in Britian. Sure the Nazis almost blotted out Christianity in their lands, a burden still carried by Germany. Why would Britain be keen to share this burden of anxieties, channeled through EU directives seventy years after beating the Nazis. Out from the other angle: Germany ought to grow up, shed the European *carapace* and take responsibility for itself, develope its political profile at the cost of economic bullying.

Another example is the troubling language to be found in German science text books. To read them as a freshman used to be so painstaking, awfull and boring precisely because they were loaded with gratiously technical jargon and abstract language, difficult to understand. It is for this reason that all my friends including myself in student years in the 1960s would turn to English text books as a rule of thumb. I don‘t know to which degree this observation still holds true today. I just came across an extremely gender biased national survey on „Men‘s Health“ produced by a private charity for the German government. The report runs over several hundred pages of which roughly two thirds are dealing somehow with male sex, as if sex were all that counts. The report is lacking balance as well as historical sensibility. The reason for this it would appear is that gender studies keep clearing up the whole gammut of research grants just as last decade climate studies did.

Anway German scientific jargon used to reflect a strong penchant for reification – a dry tone and frightening distance from the merely humane end of things. For this the great philosopher Martin Heidegger once coined the term „Seinsvergessenheit“, the eclipse of being. It was on this account that he aimed at creating a more active and subjective language, in order to give Germany a more authentic voice. To his merit Heidegger wanted to bring German closer to English by transforming nouns back into verbal phrases. This endeavour was gratiously castigated later by Theodor W. Adorno as "jargon of authenticity“". The self-hating liberal intellectuals overlooked the perfectly reasonable diagnosis of Heidegger simply because he was a right-wing intellectual. Equally Adorno unlike Heidegger was probably unaware why German had during the inter-war period lost to English its priviledged status as the „lingua franca“ of science. The reification of German culture most likely emerged from the rapid industrialization during the 19th century and manifests itself in a heavy load of “nouns”, a centrifugal sort of factual impersonal articulation in contrast to centripetal verbal phrases.

History of Categories, Lazar Gulkowitsch 1898-1941

Verbs are pointing to the subject of speech as much as nouns point to ends and remote exigencies. This difference also contributes to English as a better medium for presenting ones persona, as opposed to the slightly submissive German bent towards authority or other-directednes. Compared to this the Englishmen is more self-directed, gregarious, avers to authority and horizontally inclined. Clearly the architeture of English Churches betray a horizontal design or a restrained rendering of vertical Continental Gothics. On a more practical note, we observe that the abundant English use of phrasal verbs is a vehicle of colloquial economizing, which points to the inner alertness of a discerning free will which is being employed for shaping the mother tongue. Similar observations can be made for biblical Hebrew and pre-revolutionary Russian, both languages not spoiled by the Reformation. Yet the most interesting part here is that biblical Hebrew is almost purpose-built for supporting the control of narrow instincts. In other words Hebrew lends itself for proping up the voice of conscience rather than fostering the articulation of emotions and instincts. Funny enough, Hebrew before WW I had not even word for sex. It has been proven by Lazar Gulkowitch in the 1930s that all Semitic languages share “stem themes” based on a characteristic structure called the “triple consonant root”. This spreads out in many branches of words, all sharing those three consonants, linked by the same meaning ot what might be taken as one virtual network. The tension between the root consonant and the umbrella of words emerging form it was deemed by Lazar Gulkowitsch as the engine of free associations. Gulkowitsch was the pioneer of lingustic history of terms or concepts and he worked out that all Semitic tongues are providing a rather flexible but vertical structure in the human mind, allowing for a well balanced psychic condition which is regularly being actualized through prayer. Importantly the network is supposedly granting the person a superiority of the mind over the body. Unfortunately Gulkowitsch’s unique research was cut short by the Nazis who murdered him together with his family in Auschwitz in May 1941.

Another important feature is shared by English, Russian and Hebrew, all of which were able to preserve more direct expressions due to the preference of genetic verbal expressions, close to biblical parlance which makes for Christian consistency uncorrupted by the Reformation. The latter certainly had an anti-intellectual bias and replaced charitable work with grandstanding and pontificating or what is today known as virtue signalling. Languages that remained unaffected by the Reformation kept their religious charisma, a liveliness that protected them from Protestant sclerotics, fact worship and abstract rationalizations. The German language was twice mutilated, once by Reformation and again by the Nazis, making it particularly vulnerable to political correctness and grandstanding. By contrast the Russian tongue is even more enchanted than English if we follow Isaiah Berlin as it emerges from his sweeping studies of Russian literature of

the 19th century. At the time Russian was famous for its attention to inwardness, emotional expressions and lively tone.

Now all this matters greately in view of the new anti-globalist sensibilities in Europa and beyond. Many nations are now avers to detached, relativist and universalist hogwash that keeps hoovering in the liberal universe devoid of any truth claims. In addition the rationalistic vocabulary of progressive group think is hostile to centripetal categories such as nation, family and religion – all of which touch on the vital interest of indiginous cultures. After all who wants to talk in gender neutral new speak and address anyone gender-neutral as “Mx” rather than Mrs. and Mr.? Against this the American tea party, Brexit and national minded Eastern Europeans and Israelis have ushered in a Renaissance of ethnicity, authenticity and particularism against global urban elites. These new antiglobal players are about to alleviate the political isolation of Israel by global liberalism, for Israel for sheer survival was first to champion the Renaissance of the nation state which now desitned to unravel the unipolar world order.